

Message Text

SECRET

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16

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 DPW-01 IO-13

AID-20 RSR-01 /115 W

----- 115962

R 171107Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2142

INFO CINCPAC

COMUSSAG

DIA

DOD (ISA)

JCS

S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 7220

DEPT PASS VOA FOR BACKGROUND ONLY

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, CB

SUBJECT: REPORTS OF KI BATTALION RALLYING TO FIRST DIVISION

REF: PHNOM PENH 7100

1. FIRST DIVISION COMMANDER BG ITH SUONG HAS DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY SUPPLIED FOREIGN PRESS REPRESENTATIVES WITH A STORY THAT A KI BATTALION OFFERED TO RALLY TO HIM ON ROUTE 5 NORTH OF PHNOM PENH, WAS BLOCKED BY NVA ELEMENTS, AND WAS STRUCK MISTAKENLY BY KAF AND U.S. TACTICAL AIRCRAFT. FACTS WE HAVE RECEIVED ON THIS MATTER DIRECTLY FROM ITH SUONG AND SEVENTH DIVISION COMMANDER UN KAU V THROW DOUBT ON THIS STORY.

2. THE LATEST VERSION OF THE STORY AS RECEIVED BY TIME STRINGER FROM A KHMER WHO CLAIMS TO HAVE BEEN WITH ITH SUONG THROUGHOUT THIS PERIOD IS AS FOLLOWS: OUM SEREI, THE COMMANDER OF KI 09 BATTALION MET WITH ITH
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SUONG THREE TIMES, THE LAST MEETING OCCURRING ON JULY 11.

(SOURCE CLAIMS TO HAVE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THESE MEETINGS).
OUM SEREI CLAIMED THAT NOT ONLY WOULD HIS BATTALION WITH
400 MEN, THREE 105MM HOWITZERS AND THREE TRUCKS RALLY
BUT THAT 07 BATTALION, OVER WHICH HE HAD OPERATIONAL
RESPONSIBILITIES, WOULD COME OVER. AS EARLIER REPORTED
BY AP, HE CLAIMED TO HAVE 20 NORTH VIETNAMESE CAPTIVES.
SUBSEQUENTLY 09 AND 15 KI BATTALIONS, WHICH CONTAIN A
LARGE NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE, REPORTEDLY BLOCKED
ESCAPE OF 07 AND 09 USING EITHER SIX OF ONE PT-76 TANKS.
ON THE MORNING OF JULY 12, THE RALLIERS WERE HIT BY KAF
T-28S AND ON AFTERNOON OF THE SAME DAY BY USAF PHANTOMS
RESULTING IN 100 AND 120 CASUALTIES RESPECTIVELY.
(COMMENT: FOUR USAF F4A'S STRUCK A PREVIOUSLY CLEARED
TARGET CONFIRMED ENEMY BUNKERS) AT VT 700874 1227-1245
12 JUL 73 UNDER CONTROL OF U.S. FAC).

3. AARMA (CAPT. GALDA) RAISED MATTER WITH ITH SUONG ON
JULY 14, WHO GAVE AS HIS SOURCE FOR THIS INFORMATION AN
UNNAMED VILLAGER NEAR HIS HEADQUARTERS, WHOM HE LAST SAW
ON JULY 11. ITH SUONG WOULD NOT NAME THE SOURCE AND
EVADED A SUGGESTION THAT HE BE BROUGHT TO THE CAPITAL.
IT WAS THIS VILLAGER WHO SUPPLIED THE CALL SIGN AND
FREQUENCY BY WHICH ITH SUONG CONTACTED THE ENEMY COMMANDER
BY RADIO FROM A SMALL VILLAGE ON ROUTE 5. THIS OCCURRED
ON 12 JULY 73. ASKED WHETHER HE BELIEVED THE INFORMATION
HE HAD RECEIVED FROM THE VILLAGER, ITH SUONG REPLIED
"MAYBE NOT".

4. AARMA ALSO DISCUSSED THIS STORY WITH COLONEL NGIN SAROEUNG,
WHO COMMANDS OUDONG MSD WHERE EVENTS SUPPOSEDLY OCCURRED,
AND SEVENTH DIVISION COMMANDER UN KAUV, WHOSE TROOPS
REPORTEDLY CLASHED WITH RALLIERS. BOTH DOUBTED THE
VERACITY OF THE REPORT. UN KAUV NOTED THAT HE HAD JUST
LOST HIS THIRD COMPANY-SIZE POSITION IN THE AREA WHERE
THE RALLIERS WERE ORIGINALLY THOUGHT TO BE. OUR G-2
SOURCES HOLD A SIMILAR ASSESSMENT OF ITH SUONG'S STORY.

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5. COMMENT: WE CARRY KI BATTALIONS MENTIONED BY ITH
SUONG TO THE SOUTH OF PHNOM PENH, BUT THEY COULD HAVE
REDEPLOYED TO PHNOM BASSET REGION (AP MENTIONED ON BN IN ITS
VERSION OF THE STORY AS BEING IN ROUTE 2 AREA). WE
ALSO BELIEVE THESE UNITS INCLUDE SUBSTANTIAL VIETNAMESE
ELEMENTS. OTHER DETAILS APPEAR SUSPECT, HOWEVER. IT IS
POSSIBLE THAT ITH SUONG HAS EMBROIDERED A TALE FROM AN
UNRELIABLE SOURCE OF THAT HE HAS FALLEN FOR AN ENEMY

RUSE. IN ANY EVENT THE STORY SHOULD BE TREATED WITH
UTMOST CAUTION.
SWANK

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NNN

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